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SUBJECT: TRANSFORMATION OF KIVU ARMED GROUPS INTO POLITICAL PARTIES

REF: KINSHASA 223

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Based on recent conversations in Goma, it appears that a majority of the armed groups in North and South Kivu will coalesce into four political parties. The CNDP and PARECO-Hutu will create individual parties, and most of the various Mai-Mai groups will form two umbrella groupings (reftel reports on initial steps on the latter move). All the interested parties have deposited their founding documents with the GDRC and await official recognition by the Minister of the Interior. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Elements from fifteen of the Mai-Mai groups in North and South Kivu have agreed to form a party called the Union of Democratic Congolese Resistance (in French, "Union de Resistance Democratique Congolaise"--URDC). It comprises elements from the following groups: Mai-Mai Yakutumba, Zabuloni, Ny'Kiriba, Mahoro, Kapopo, Kasindien, Shikito, Kirikicho, Simba, Rwenzori, Mongol, Mudundu 40, PARECO/South Kivu, UJPS, and Raia Mutomboki.

¶3. (SBU) The President of this party is Vincent Ngeya Tambwe, the Yakutumba representative to the Amani structures, and its Secretary-General is Assanda Mwenebatu, the Yakutumba spokesman. The latter has also been the permanent secretary of the Amani joint commission since the middle of last year. As a Yakutumba-driven creation, it is likely to be more focused on South Kivu than on North Kivu despite its mixed membership.

¶4. (SBU) The second Mai-Mai grouping is known as the "Alliance of Popular and Patriotic Forces of Congo" (in French, "Alliance des Forces Populaires et Patriotiques du Congo"--AFPC). It brings together elements from seven Mai-Mai groups across the two Kivus (Note: Certain Mai-Mai groups have elements represented in both parties. End note). The seven groups are as follows: Mai-Mai Vurondo, Kasindien, Shabunda, Mongol, Simba (North Kivu), Simba (South Kivu), and PARECO/South Kivu. The architect of this party appears to be Jules Ziringabo, member of Simba (South Kivu) and formerly of the AFDL. Most of the others involved appear to be political novices.

¶5. (SBU) Ziringabo told us that the AFPC represented the "real Mai-Mai groups," with a political agenda, unlike the URDC, which was only concerned with gaining government positions for its leadership.

The AFPC, Ziringabo claimed, is not just Kivu-based; rather, it has nation-wide support. In a separate meeting, URDC Secretary General Assanda Mwenebatu told us that his party was a serious group of 15 ex-armed groups, more representative than the mere 7 groups that comprised the AFPC.

¶6. (SBU) It is no surprise that PARECO-Hutu has opted to become a political party, but there are a number of issues to monitor in this context. PARECO-Hutu appears to be more interested in a political alliance with the Tutsis, i.e. CNDP, than in joining with former fellow PARECO members in other factions of that movement. This would complement the kind of reconciliation with CNDP that some

within PARECO-Hutu reportedly seek.

¶ 7. (SBU) PARECO-Hutu claims that Governor Paluku is holding up confirmation of its status as a political party until it is certain that LaFontaine and his men from PARECO-Nande are given positions in the FARDC (Note: The truth of this claim is in question. End note).

Additionally, the PARECO-Hutu party will officially oppose splitting North Kivu because it knows it is a controversial point. However, the principals all clearly favor a split.

¶ 8. (SBU) The obvious absentees from these four groups are the FRF and PARECO-Nande. If the former finally enters integration, its members are likely to form their own party - they will not want to be associated with the North Kivu Rwandophones, nor any of the Mai-Mai (and vice-versa). PARECO-Nande, by contrast, is likely to be absorbed into the well-established Nande political structures.

¶ 9. (SBU) Comment: If a PARECO-Hutu/CNDP reconciliation does occur, it will signal a significant step towards a Rwandophone agenda and could precipitate a political response from the non-Rwandophones in North Kivu, such as an alliance between the Mai-Mai parties and the Nande. As for the various Mai-Mai groups, they have sensibly come together. However, it is unclear how much electoral support even these consolidated groups will have. At present their primary aim is to ensure that some of their members are appointed to political and administrative offices under the banner of their March 23 agreements with the GDRC. End comment.

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